

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0505

April 12, 2002

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing in response to the horrific situation facing Israel. Today's terrorist bombing – on the very day that Secretary Powell was in Jerusalem to discuss an end to the violence – makes one thing abundantly clear: Secretary Powell should not meet with Yasser Arafat. Instead, your Administration should announce its unequivocal support for the State of Israel, which is in a fight for its survival against the forces of terror.

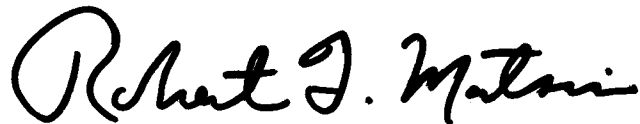
It is essential that the United States stand by its closest ally and only true friend in the Middle East. Supporting Israel is both a moral and strategic imperative. Israel is a democratic oasis in the Middle East and one of the only states in the region that does not sponsor, harbor, or aid international terrorist organizations. Terrorist bombers with no respect for human life are striking at will. And yet the people of Israel somehow find the strength to carry on, to rebuild, and not to give in to terror. In the wake of the horrific attacks of September 11th, Americans can find a renewed kinship with Israeli citizens, who have demonstrated such indomitable spirit in the face of unrelenting hostility.

Mr. President, Yasser Arafat is not a partner for peace. He has done nothing to stop, or even condemn, the terrorist bombings in Israel. Indeed, it appears that his administration is actively supporting and prosecuting these horrific attacks. Simply put, the wave of suicide bombings directed against innocent Israeli civilians demonstrates what we have long suspected to be true: Arafat is a terrorist. A meeting between Secretary Powell and Arafat would be tantamount to capitulating to terrorism. It would set a dangerous precedent in a dangerous world, and would show that the United States is willing to negotiate with those who employ terror to achieve their ends. Even worse, it would convey to our enemies that terrorism is a successful strategy. Like all concerned Americans, I hope for a peaceful, negotiated solution to the crisis in the Middle East. But I cannot envision such a settlement as long as Yasser Arafat is at the table.

Americans applaud the way your Administration has prosecuted the war on terrorism. Israel's war is part and parcel of our struggle. I ask you to reconsider Secretary

Powell's meeting with Arafat and make clear the United States' staunch support for the State of Israel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert T. Matsui". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

ROBERT T. MATSUI
Member of Congress